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TEED 522 Fall, 2011

**Pre-Post Assessment**

1. **Introduction**

School: Ballard High School  
Grade/Class: 10th grade World Literature and Composition  
Unit duration: 5 weeks

**Description:**

This unit is an introduction to Lincoln-Douglas style debates. The unit begins at the start of the semester and finishes in time for the HSPE in the middle of March. The central theme of this unit is persuasive writing; however, there are a number of skills involved. One of the major goals of the unit is to give students the opportunity to deliver a polished, well-presented public speech. Before the students can do that, the students will need to practice a unique combination of research, analysis, and group work. The unit will begin with the students journaling about their prior knowledge of debate and developing their concept of what constitutes debate. Many students will only have political debates as a point of reference and it is important to clarify the many differences between those debates and the ones we will study in class.

This debate unit is structured to give students ample practice working in small groups and pairs. To help this go smoothly, we will focus on how groups work together effectively and how to disagree with ideas rather than people. We will research the topics from multiple perspectives so the students learn to value differing points of view, and to be prepared to anticipate arguments from the opposing team. The research will also help expand the students’ worlds/beliefs while concretely basing them in evidence. Many students, and adults, struggle with organization despite it being crucial to success in many areas of life. Debate will develop and continually test this skill, not only organizing papers (for the annotated bibliography), but also organizing arguments and thoughts (for the actual debate).

**2. Purpose of the Pre-Post Assessment:**

Assessment drives instructional decisions (Stiggins, p. 26). By gathering evidence of student knowledge, we are able to create lessons that address student needs. Building on Stiggins’ ideas, my pre-post assessment will help me gather vital information that will influence my approach to the unit. It will provide information about the students’ schema about debate. The assessment will serve as evidence that my instruction had a “positive impact on student learning” that is required by the state. Additionally, this assessment will show the students how much they have learned from the unit which will motivate them to work hard on the next unit and give them a sense of pride about their accomplishments.

The purpose of pre-assessment is to find out how much the students already know about debate, which will directly affect how I deliver the content. Furthermore, the pre-assessment requires me to focus my goals and learning targets, as well as align my instructional methodology for the unit. The post-assessment will measure how much the students know about debate after spending five weeks studying the concept. This information will help inform my instructional decisions because it will show how effectively I taught the material the first time. While the students may be skeptical of the pre-assessment, it will serve as a useful study tool because it will give them concrete evidence of what they are expected to learn (Stiggins, p. 29). The students will be able to see the correlation between their effort and their knowledge base, which will motivate them to continue to work hard in the class.

**3. Unit Level Learning Targets:**

**LT1** (Concept): Students will understand what makes a debate effective. *Communication GLE 4.1.1. Analyzes and evaluates strengths and weaknesses of one’s own communication using own or established criteria.*

**LT2** (Introduced Skill): Students will be able to present an organized and effective argument. *Communication GLE 3.1.1. Applies skills to plan and organize effective oral communication and presentation.*

**LT 3** (Practiced Skill): Students will be able to see multiple sides to a topic. *Communication GLE**2.1.1: Analyzes the needs of the audience, situation, and setting to adjust language and other communication strategies.*

**LT4** (Practiced skill): Students will be able to work in a group and pair. *Communication GLE 2.2.2. Applies skills and strategies to contribute responsibly in a group setting.*

**LT5** (Disposition): Students will respect the opinion of others. *Communication GLE 2.2.1. Uses communication skills that demonstrate respect.*

**4.** **Pre-Post Instruction Assessment Instrument:**

I will use the same assessment tool (attached) for both the pre-assessment and the post-assessment. This will allow me to directly compare what the students knew before to what they learned from the unit.

My pre-post assessment will ask students to respond in short answer form to a series of questions that guide my unit in regards to themes. Students will be asked questions about the structure of debate, what makes a debate effective, and the importance of seeing multiple sides to an issue. The first learning target lends itself to the short answer form the best because it is a concept target. The second, third, and forth targets are skills. The third and forth targets lend themselves to short answer because students can pretend they are in a situation that needs that skill. The second target is not that flexible and while I cannot assess the students’ ability to perform this skill through short answer, I can assess their background knowledge required to perform the skill (Stiggins, p. 102). The students will perform their debate before I give this post-assessment and that will serve as the true summative assessment of their ability to present organized and effective arguments. I cannot directly assess these skills before the unit, only their prerequisite knowledge. However, the short answer format will allow the students to respond in a number of ways without being guided by me or the questions. Additionally, this format will allow me to see evidence of the students’ reasoning skills (Stiggins, p. 84). Due to the explicit nature of the questions in the pre-post assessment, I will be able to clearly see evidence of the students’ level of content knowledge. The third and forth learning targets are also a skill based targets, but I am able to ask the students to respond to a scenario. Again, this is not a perfect match of target to assessment tool, but it is as close to a performance assessment as I can get without asking the students to debate at the start of the unit. The fifth target is a dispositional target and assessing those is difficult. For the pre-post assessment I am asking the students to explain their current belief in regards to the disposition I would like them to have by the end of the unit. The use of a specific question that elicits the intensity of the disposition can reveal responses that are easily interpreted (Stiggins, p. 234).

**5. Possible Distortion or Bias:**

There are a number of reasons my assessment tool might not adequately measure my students’ content knowledge. First, the selection of short answer as the assessment tool might be too far removed from the suggested performance assessment tool. My students might be able to see multiple sides to a topic, but not be able to respond to my question in a way that provides me enough evidence to know their ability. This assessment tool comes readymade with the problem of wording. I might have written the questions in language that excludes students of certain cultures and backgrounds, not to mention language proficiency. Question number three is of particular concern because it asks students to look at the issue outside of their culture. Another bias that is linked with short answer assessment is the type of intelligence that is addressed, or rather the intelligences that are excluded. Verbal and linguistic learners are much more apt to do well with this kind of assessment. Students who struggle to get their ideas across in writing will struggle with this assessment and there is no alternative to the written word.

All that being said, the aspect of bias and distortion I am most concerned about is reader bias. The order in which I read the papers might distort my interpretation. When I first sit down with a stack of papers I am fairly strict, but as the time passes I tend to grade easier. I am learning my boundaries and when to take necessary breaks. The other way my bias might distort the assessment is my expectation of each student. From the few experiences I have assessing students’ writing samples, I have noticed that I grade on different scales for different students and I grade responses against each other instead of against the rubric. Some students may need a better grade on the assignment since they are struggling, others may not be living up to their full potential and receiving a lower grade would motivate them. I have found that covering all the names before reading and creating a detailed rubric greatly reduces this tendency.

**6. Pre-Post Assessment Instrument:**

Please respond to the questions using complete sentences.

1. What makes a debate effective?
2. What is the structure of a Lincoln-Douglas style debate? Why is the organization important?
3. Some people believe that the United States is the best country in the world. Briefly describe how you agree and how you disagree.
4. Tell me about a time you worked in a group that worked well together. What did people do to make it a positive experience? (Include at least three details)
5. How important is it to respect other people beliefs? Explain.

Checklist for grading:

**Question #1: 4 points**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Did the student mention… | Present | Absent |
| Organization of ideas |  |  |
| Structure of debate |  |  |
| Clarity of ideas |  |  |
| Effective delivery |  |  |

**Question #2: 4 points**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Did the student mention… | Present | Absent |
| Constructive Speeches |  |  |
| Cross-Examination |  |  |
| Rebuttals |  |  |
| The structure gives each team equal opportunity to talk |  |  |

**Question #3: 4 points**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Did the student give… | Present | Absent |
| At least one reason why they agree |  |  |
| At least one reason why they disagree |  |  |
| An explanation why they agree |  |  |
| An explanation why they disagree |  |  |

**Question #4: 4 points**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Did the student write… | Present | Absent |
| About a group experience that went well |  |  |
| One detail about what went well in the group |  |  |
| One detail about what went well in the group |  |  |
| One detail about what went well in the group |  |  |

**Question #5: 4 points**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Did the student… | Present | Absent |
| Address the prompt |  |  |
| Give explanation of their reasoning |  |  |
| Give examples to explain their reasoning |  |  |
| Think about both sides of the issue |  |  |